

# NAJI HAKIM

Organist

Tuesday, October 7, 2008  
7:30 p.m.

Edythe Bates Old Recital Hall  
and  
Grand Organ

Alice Pratt Brown Hall  
The Shepherd School of Music

Sponsored by the Rice University President's Lecture Series



RICE

J.S. Bach: *Prelude and Fugue in E Minor, BWV 548*

Naji Hakim: *Bach'orama*

César Franck: *Prière*

Olivier Messiaen: *Le Vent de l'Esprit*

## INTERMISSION

Naji Hakim: *Sakskøbing Præludier*

## Improvisation

**J.S. Bach (1685-1750): *Prelude and Fugue in E Minor, BWV 548* (1717)**

The art of counterpoint is deftly applied by Bach to the frame of a sonata form in this most developed diptych, both in the prelude and quite exceptionally in the fugue, where an exact recapitulation of the exposition occurs. The textures of the fugal episodes bring to mind the spirit of the solo passages found in baroque concertos.

**Naji Hakim (1955- ): *Bach'orama - Orgelfantasie über Themen von Johann Sebastian Bach* (2003)**

This organ fantasy develops several themes from Johann Sebastian Bach's works. The succession of motifs inspires different metrical, contrapuntal or expressive textures, generating a rhapsodic form. The royal theme from *The Musical Offering*, followed by a fugal development of "Kyrie II" from his *B Minor Mass*, appear in the middle of the structure as it climaxes to this homage of Bach.

**César Franck (1822-1890): *Prière* (1860)**

A very expressive and lyrical work typical of the romantic, symphonic style of César Franck, associated with the Cavaillé-Coll organ of Sainte Clotilde in Paris, *Prière* was one of Franck's first published works for organ. The dense harmonic texture is put in relief through the use of the foundation stops, the oboe, and the trumpet of the swell division.

**Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992): *Le Vent de l'Esprit* (1951)**

Messe de la Pentecôte is the result of improvisations during the mass at la Trinité. The final movement of this mass, *Le Vent de l'Esprit*, combines an improvisatory fantasy in the outer segments (representing the wind of the spirit), with a very structured middle section where a developed decorative upper line (chorus of larks) is joined by a chordal and pedal accompaniment in chromatic durations.



### Naji Hakim: *Sakskøbing Præludier* (2005)

1. *Mit hjerte altid vanker* (Always my heart wanders to the birthplace of Jesus)
2. *Nærmere, Gud, til dig* (Nearer, my God, to Thee)
3. *O Gud, du ved og kender* (O God, Thou knowest)
4. *At sige verden ret farvel* (The last farewell to life on earth)
5. *Hil dig, Frelser og Forsoner!* (Hail Thee, Saviour and Atoner)
6. *Den mørke nat forgangen er* (The gloomy night to morning yields)
7. *Nu blomstertiden kommer* (Now the flowers are blooming)
8. *Påskeblomst!* (Paschal Flower! why do you care to come forth?)
9. *Op, al den ting, som Gud har gjort* (Arise, all things that God has made)
10. *O kristelighed!* (O thou, image of Christ!)
11. *Så vældigt det mødte os først i vor dåb* (How wonderful, that the Word first met us in baptism)
12. *Befal du dine veje* (Commit thy way [unto God])

At the initiative of Pastor Hanne Margrethe Tougaard and organist Flemming Chr. Hansen, the Sakskøbing Church, in Denmark, released in September 2004 a CD of Danish hymns "*Salmer til tiden – en musikalsk velkomst til den nye salmebog*" (Hymns for our time – a musical introduction to the new hymn book). The Sakskøbing Kirkes Pigechor and Sakskøbing Kammerkor are led by Flemming Chr. Hansen on this CD.

The Sakskøbing Præludier of Naji Hakim\* are based on some of these chorales\*\*, coming within the framework of an ecumenical approach and to pay grateful homage to the Sakskøbing parish, to its organist, and to its pastor. The work has been written in two versions: one version for organ and another version for chamber ensemble (flute, clarinet, bassoon, harp, violin, viola, and cello).

The Preludes are distinguished by widely contrasting styles that accompany the poetic line of the texts of the hymns, the theological axis that underlies them, and the liturgical season. They find their place as much in the liturgy as they do in concert.

*Mit hjerte altid vanker* develops a dancing movement around the chorale of Carl Nielsen. Chimes, melismas, aksak rhythms (3+2+2) and toccatas give the dominant colour of the cycle, emerging from the joy of Christmas. Expressive harmonies accompany the declamation in the tenor of *Nærmere, Gud, til dig*. In *O Gud, du ved og kender* the cantus is contrasted by a perpetual movement, an image of the confident Christian, carried by a compelling stream in the steps of Christ. *At sige verden ret farvel* is an expressive, harmonic meditation full of chromaticism, facing the torments of death and the mystery of Redemption. *Hil dig, Frelser og Forsoner!* illustrates the loving and grateful thrust of the Christian soul towards the Crucified, Saviour and Consoler. One may see in the *perpetuum mobile* of the middle section, a picture of the Eternal Joy in Christ. A relief of serenity and of light frames the majestic declamation of the tenor of *Den mørke nat forgangen er*. Based on a Swedish popular melody, *Nu blomstertiden kommer* offers a cheerful and dancing thanksgiving; a praise to the Creator. The Easter chorale *par excellence* in Denmark, *Påskeblomst*\*\*\* is paraphrased harmonically here, with an ascending cadential progression and a crescendo culminating in the splendour of the Resurrection.

The overflowing joy of *Op, al den ting, som Gud har gjort* takes up again the character of the initial movement of the cycle and falls within the message of Psalm 150: "Let all that breathes praise the Lord." The peaceful paraphrase of *O kristelighed* weds an ABA form to the ornamental variation. The light texture of *Så vældigt det mødte os først i vor dåb* symbolizes the baptismal water and the encounter with the Beloved. *Befal du dine veje* concludes the cycle in a popular and festive character, exuberant with joy.

\* On June 12, 2005, Naji Hakim inaugurated the organ of Allen Quantum of Sakskøbing Church, Denmark.

\*\* With the only exception of the first prelude, *Mit hjerte altid vanker*.

\*\*\* This same melody has already been treated by Naji Hakim in a work for string orchestra, *Påskeblomst*, published by U.M.P. in England.

**Naji Subhy Paul Irénée Hakim** was born in Beirut on October 31, 1955. He studied organ with J. Langlais and at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris in the classes of R. Boutry, J.-C. Henry, M. Bitsch, R. Falcinelli, J. Castérède and S. Nigg, in which he was awarded seven first prizes. He is a licentiate teacher in organ from Trinity College of Music in London and won nine first prizes at international organ and composition competitions. In 1991 he was awarded the Prix André Caplet by the Académie des Beaux-Arts. He served as organist of the Basilique du Sacré-Coeur in Montmartre, Paris, from 1985 until 1993, and then became titular organist of l'église de la Trinité, succeeding Olivier Messiaen, from 1993 until 2008. He is professor of music analysis at the Conservatoire National de Région de Boulogne-Billancourt and visiting professor at the Royal Academy of Music, London. Dr. Hakim is a graduate of the École Nationale Supérieure des Télécommunications in Paris, a member of the Consociation Internationalis Musicae Sacrae in Rome, and Doctor honoris causa of the University Saint-Esprit of Kaslik, Lebanon. In 2007, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, awarded Naji Hakim the Insignia Augustae Crucis Insigne Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, for his excellent commitment and work for the benefit of the Church and the Holy Father. His works include instrumental music (organ, flute, bassoon, horn, trumpet, harp, guitar, violin, and piano), symphonic music (*Les Noces de l'Agneau*, *Hymne de l'Univers*, *Ouverture Libanaise*, *Påskeblomst*, four organ concertos, and a violin concerto), and vocal music (oratorio *Saul de Tarse*, cantata *Phèdre*, *Magnificat*, and three masses).  
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